

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 327

UNCLAS GUATEMALA 1314

DEPT PASS:

USUN NEW YORK

US MISSION GENEVA

SECDEF NIACT IMMEDIATE

JCS NIACT IMMEDIATE

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: SWEL GT

SUBJECT: GUATEMALAN EARTHQUAKE - ATLANTIC HIGHWAY

1. THIS MORNING I MET WITH THE PRESIDENT TO DISCUSS THE REHABILITATION OF THE ATLANTIC HIGHWAY. LT. COL. JOHNSTON PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT AND HIS MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS, ENG. ARGUEDAS, THE RESULTS OF THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS SURVEY, AND USAD CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, FRANK KENEFICK, PRESENTED OUR CONCEPT OF THE THREE PHASE APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM. (SEE GUATEMALA 1248).

2. THE PRESIDENT APPRECIATED THE PRESENTATION AND AGREED FULLY WITH OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE URGENCY OF COMPLETING REPAIRS BEFORE THE ADVENT OF THE RAINY SEASON AND THE LIMITATIONS OF IN COUNTRY EQUIPMENT TO CARRY OUT THE JOB WITHIN THE TIME CONSTRAINTS. HE ALSO UNDERSTOOD THE LIMITED OBJECTIVES

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OF PHASE I AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES

TO BE CARRIED OUT UNDER PHASE II.

3. I EXPLAINED THAT I FELT THAT THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS WAS UNIQUELY QUALIFIED TO ASSIST HIS GOVERNMENT DURING PHASE I AND THAT IF HE WAS IN AGREEMENT WITH THE APPROACH WE HAD PROPOSED, I WAS PREPARED TO RECOMMEND TO WASHINGTON THAT WE PROVIDE SUCH ASSISTANCE. THE PRESIDENT ENDORSED THE APPROACH, EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION FOR THE POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE WE MIGHT PROVIDE AND OFFERED HIS AND THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS FULL COOPERATION.

4. SINCE TIME REMAINS OF THE ESSENCE IN COMMENCING WORK ON THE HIGHWAY, PLEASE EXERT ALL POSSIBLE EFFORTS TO CONFIRM THAT THE UNIT RESOURCES NECESSARY TO RESPOND TO THIS TASK ARE OR COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE BY DOD AND PROVIDE US WITH THE COST ESTIMATE FOR THE PERIOD OF SERVICES PROJECTED. NOTWITHSTANDING ANY MINOR INERAGENCY COMPLICATIONS WHICH MIGHT ARISE CONCERNING COST ASSIGNMENT AND AVAILABILITY, PLEASE CONSIDER THIS AS A FORMAL REQUEST FOR WASHINGTON APPROVAL OF MY RECOMMENDATION TO COMMIT A US ENGINEER TASK FORCE TO ASSIST THE GOVERNMENT OF GUATEMALA WITH THE PHASE I REOPENING OF THE ATLANTIC HIGHWAY.

5. YOUR EARLIEST POSSIBLE RESPONSE ON THE QUESTIONS OF AVAILABILITY AND COST ARE REQUESTED.

MELOY

NOTE BY OC/T: PASSED ABOVE ADDRESSEES.

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